

R277. Education, Administration.

R277-491. School Community Councils.

R277-491-1. Definitions.

- A. "Board" means the Utah State Board of Education.
- B. "Candidate" means a parent or school employee who has filed for election to the school community council.
- C. "Contested race" means the election of members to a school community council when there are more candidates than open positions.
- D. "Days" means calendar days unless otherwise specifically designated.
- E. "Educator" means a person who holds a current license and is employed by the school district where the person's child attends school.
- F. "Parent" means the parent or guardian of a student attending a school district public school.
- G. "Parent or guardian member":
 - (1) means a member of a school community council who is a parent or guardian of a student who is attending the school; will be enrolled at the school at any time during the parent's or guardian's initial term of office; or was enrolled at the school during the parent or guardian member's initial term of office;
 - (2) may not include an educator who is employed at the school.
- H. "School administrator" means a school principal, school assistant principal or designee as specifically assigned by the school district.
- I. "School community" means the geographic area designated by the school district as the attendance area with reasonable inclusion of the parents or legal guardians of additional students who are attending the school.
- J. "School community council" means the council organized at each school district public school as established in Section 53A-1a-108 and R277-491. The council includes the principal or designee, school employee members and parent members. There shall be at least a two parent member majority.
- K. "School employee member" means a member of a school community council who is a person employed at a school by the school or school district, including the principal.
- L. "Secure ballot box" means a closed container prepared by the school for the deposit of secret ballots for the school community council elections.
- M. "Student" means a child in public school grades kindergarten through twelve counted on the audited October 1 Fall Enrollment Report.
- N. "USDB" means the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.
- O. "USOE" means the Utah State Office of Education.

R277-491-2. Authority and Purpose.

- A. This rule is authorized by Utah Constitution Article X, Section 3 which vests general control and supervision of public

education in the Board and by Section 53A-1-401(3) which permits the Board to adopt rules in accordance with its responsibilities.

B. Local boards of education for school districts and the State Charter School Board for state-sponsored charter schools are responsible for school community council operations, plans, oversight, and training.

C. The purpose of this rule is to:

(1) provide procedures and clarifying information to school community councils to assist them in fulfilling school community council responsibilities consistent with Section 53A-1a-108(3);

(2) provide direction to school districts and schools in establishing and maintaining school community councils whose primary focus is to develop, approve, and assist in implementing school improvement plans, and advise school/school district administrators consistent with Sections 53A-1a-108(3) and 53A-16-101.5;

(3) provide a framework and support for improved academic achievement of students that is locally driven from within individual schools, through critical review of testing results and other indicators of student success, by establishing meaningful, measurable goals and implementing research-based programs and processes to reach the goals;

(4) encourage increased participation of the parents, school employees and others that support the purposes of the school community councils; and

(5) encourage compliance with the law.

R277-491-3. School Community Council Member Election Provisions.

A. Notice of the school community council elections shall be provided at least 10 days prior to the elections. The notice shall include the dates and times of the election, the positions that are up for election and instructions about becoming a candidate.

B. Parents may stand for election as parent members of a school community council at a school consistent with the definition of parent member in R277-491-1G.

C. Parents may vote for the school community council parent members if their child(ren) are enrolled at the school.

D. School community councils may establish procedures that allow for ballots to be clearly marked and mailed to the school in the case of geography or school distances that would otherwise discourage parent participation. Hand-delivered or mailed ballots shall meet the same timelines for voters voting in person.

E. Entire school districts or schools may allow parents to vote by electronic ballot. If school districts/schools allow voting by electronic means, the opportunity shall be clearly explained on the school district/school website including:

(1) directions for electronic voting;

(2) security provisions for electronic voting;

(3) statement to parents and community members that violations of a school district's/school's voting procedures may disqualify a

parent's vote or invalidate a specific school election, or both;

(4) how a parent may vote by paper ballot, if preferred.

F. Ballots and voting are required only in the event of a school community council contested race. Ballots and the results of each election shall be maintained for three years.

G. School community councils are encouraged to establish clear and written:

(1) procedures that are consistent with state law, Board rules, and local board policies;

(2) procedures for the election of school community council chairs, co-chairs or vice chairs;

(3) timelines and procedures for school community council elections that may include receiving information from applicants in a timely manner; and

(4) additional clarification and procedures to assist in the efficient operation of school community councils consistent with the law.

H. Elections shall begin no later than 30 days after the first day of school. Voting for parent/guardian members shall extend for at least three consecutive school days and be completed no later than 35 days after the first day of school.

I. Following the election, if there are more parent members who are educators in the district than parents who are not educators in the district elected to the council, the parents on the council shall appoint additional parent members until the number of parent members who are not educators exceeds the number of parent educators in the district.

J. Following the election, the principal shall enter and sign a Principal's Assurance Form that assures the school community council at the school was elected, and that vacancies were filled, as necessary, and that the school community council is properly constituted consistent with Section 53A-1a-108 and R277-477 and R277-491. The form shall be completed and uploaded to the School LAND Trust website.

K. School community council members who were duly elected prior to May 8, 2012 shall be allowed to complete the term for which they were elected. All school community council members shall satisfy requirements of Section 53A-1a-108 in subsequent terms.

R277-491-4. School Community Council School/School Administrator Responsibilities.

A. A school administrator may not serve as chair or co-chair of the school community council.

B. A school or school district administrator shall not prohibit or discourage a school community council from discussing any issue or concern not prohibited by law raised by any school community council member.

C. The school principal shall provide the following information to the school community:

(1) Notice of dates, times and location of school community council elections at least 10 days before the elections are held, including:

(a) timely notice of school community council positions that are up for election;

(b) instructions for applying to become a school community council member together with timelines for submitting information and applications.

(2) The school community council chair or designee shall post the school community council meeting information (time, place and date of meeting; meeting agenda and previous meeting draft minutes) on the school's website at least one week prior to each meeting.

D. The school community council chair, assisted by the school administrator, shall provide the following information on the school website and in at least one other direct delivery method ensuring that all parents are notified as provided in Section 53A-1a-108:

(1) Within the first six weeks of the school year, a list of the members of the school community council and each member's direct email or phone number, or both, and the school community council meeting schedule;

(2) By November 15 of each year, a summary of the annual report required in Section 53A-16-108.5 about how the School LAND Trust Program funds were used to enhance or improve academic excellence at the school.

E. The school community council chair, assisted by the school administrator, shall act in compliance with Section 53A-1a-108 including:

(1) ensuring that council members receive annual training about the requirements of Sections 53A-1a-108, 53A-1a-108.1 and 53A-16-101.5;

(2) posting draft minutes of the most recent meeting on the school website at least one week prior to the next meeting;

(3) posting the agenda and location of the upcoming meeting on the school's website at least one week prior to the meeting;

(4) assuring that written minutes are kept consistent with Section 53A-1a-108.1(8);

(5) assuring that written minutes are maintained, as approved, for three years as the official record of action taken at each meeting; and

(6) adopting a set of rules of order and procedures that the council shall follow to conduct a meeting. The rules shall be followed in conducting meetings, be posted on the school website and available at each meeting, and other required or appropriate activities.

F. School community council responsibilities do not allow for closed meetings, consistent with Section 53A-1a-108.1.

R277-491-5. Parent Rights and Responsibilities.

A. Parents of students attending a school shall receive notice

of open school community council positions and of elections consistent with Section 53A-1a-108.

B. Parents of students attending a school shall have access to schedules, agendas, minutes and decisions consistent with Sections 53A-1a-108(4) and (5).

C. School community council parent members shall participate fully in the development of various school plans described in Section 53A-1a-108(3) including, at a minimum:

- (1) School Improvement Plan;
- (2) School LAND Trust Plan;
- (3) Reading Achievement Plan (for elementary schools);
- (4) Professional Development Plan; and
- (5) Child Access Routing Plan.

D. Parents shall receive timely notice of school community council timelines and procedures that affect parent member elections, school community council meeting information and other parent rights or opportunities, consistent with state law, Board rules, and local board policy.

E. School websites shall fully communicate the opportunities provided to parents about serving on the school community council and how parents can directly influence the expenditure of the School LAND Trust funds. The website should include the dollar amount received each year through the program.

R277-491-6. Additional School Community Council Information and Provisions.

A. School community councils shall set the beginning terms for school community council members consistent with Section 53A-1a-108(5)(g).

B. Training for members of school community councils shall be provided under the direction of local boards of education, including providing applicable sections of the statutes and Board rules to council members.

C. School community councils shall report on plans, programs, and expenditures, including detailed descriptions of expenditures for professional development, at least annually to local boards of education and cooperate with the legislative and USOE monitoring, and audits.

D. School community councils may establish procedures and requirements for parent notification and election timelines that are not inconsistent with Sections 53A-1a-108, 53A-16-101.5, 52-4-101 et. seq., this rule, or local board policy.

E. Public schools that are secure facilities, juvenile detention facilities, hospital program schools, and other small special programs may receive all funds available to schools with school community councils if the schools demonstrate and document a good faith effort to recruit members, have meetings and publicize results as recognized and affirmed by local boards of education.

F. School community councils shall encourage greater participation on the school community council and may recruit

potential applicants to apply for open positions on the council.

G. Local boards of education may ask school community councils to address local issues at the school community council level for discussion before bringing the issues to local boards of education. School community councils may be asked for information to inform local board decisions.

H. Local boards of education shall provide copies of statutory information (Section 53A-1a-108, School community councils authorized -- Duties -- Composition -- Election procedures and selection of members; Section 53A-1a-108.1, School Community Councils - Open and public meeting requirements; Section 53A-1a-108.5, School improvement plan; Section 53A-16-101.5, School LAND Trust Program -- Purpose -- Distribution of funds -- School plans for use of funds) to school community council members.

I. Local boards of education, and the State Charter School Board for state-sponsored charter schools, shall report approval dates of required plans to the USOE. School community councils are encouraged to advise and inform elected local board members.

J. Local boards of education make decisions in governing school districts with superintendents and principals acting under the direction and in behalf of local board of education in all areas of governance, including implementing approved School Improvement and School LAND Trust Program plans.

KEY: school community councils

Date of Enactment or Last Substantive Amendment: July 9, 2012

Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: Art X Sec 3; 53A-1-401(3)